



Dorset AONB Partnership
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Dorset AONB Partnership Board Meeting, 10.00am, Thurs. 20th May 2021

Virtual (by Teams)

Draft minutes

Organisation	Representative	Status	2021-05
Independent chairman	Dr Phil Sterling	Voting member	Present
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Dr Guy Dickinson	Voting member	Present
Country Land and Business Association	Will Bond	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Peter Bowyer	Voting member	Present
Dorset Association of Parish & Town Councils	Cllr Chris Turner	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Ray Bryan	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Jane Somper	Voting member	Present
Dorset Council	Cllr Roland Tarr	Voting member	Present
Dorset Local Enterprise Partnership	Luke Rake	Voting member	Apologies
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	TBC	Voting member	
Dorset Natural History & Archaeological Society	Jeremy Pope OBE DL	Voting member	Present
Environment Agency	Keith Calder	Voting member	Present
Forestry Commission	James Robertson	Voting member	Apologies
Historic England	Ross Simmonds	Voting member	
National Farmers' Union	Robert Lasseter	Voting member	
Natural England	Robert Lloyd	Voting member	Present
The National Trust	Hannah Jefferson	Voting member	Present
Dorset Race Equalities Council	Nathalie Sherring	Voting member	Present
Jurassic Coast Trust	Lucy Culkin	Attending member	Apologies
Purbeck Heritage Network	Brian Bleese	Attending member	Apologies
LAF	Janet Davis	Attending member	Present
Dorset Council	Matt Reeks	Supporting Officer	Present
Dorset Council	Hilary Jordan	Supporting Officer	
Dorset Local Nature Partnership	Maria Clarke	Supporting Officer	Apologies
Country Land and Business Association	William Langer	Supporting Officer	Apologies
National Farmers' Union	Louise Stratton	Supporting Officer	Present

DAONB Team: Tom Munro (AONB Manager), Sally King (Visitor, Tourism & Access Manager), Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature Project Officer), Steph Aburrow (Stepping into Nature), Jill Hearing (Reconnecting the Ridgeway Project Officer), Richard Brown (Landscape Planning Officer), Caroline Kelly (Purbeck), Caroline Richards (Dorset Food & Drink), Kate Townsend (Project Support Officer).

Guests: Terry Sneller (DC Strategic Planning) and Bridget Betts (DC Env. Advice Manager)

Welcome, introductions and apologies

Chairman welcomed all, with particular welcome to our guests/speakers.

1. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

The minutes of the meeting held in November 2020 were agreed as correct. No matters arising.

2. Housing delivery test & 5-year housing supply; implications for planning decisions

TSneller explained that National Planning Policy provides guidance which must be applied to housing development proposal where the local authority cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of housing. In areas with a valid Neighbourhood Development Plan, this remains relevant as long as a 3 year supply of housing can be demonstrated. However, the so called 'tilted balance', which suggests that development may be more likely to be acceptable where a local or neighbourhood plan is 'out of date', does not necessarily apply if a development adversely affects a designated area, such as an AONB.

Comments:

- a. **PBowyer**: Concerned about Langton Matravers development, lack of DC action and concern the Dorset Plan will create an open playing field for building houses
- b. **JPope**: Extremely worried about Local Plan
- c. **Cllr Tarr**: Very worried, large-scale housing proposals detrimental to our special landscapes and we should protest, greenfield site development increasing but populations are declining
- d. **RBrown**: We have a Management Plan for the AONB which is not invalidated by a Local Plan's inability to demonstrate a sufficient land supply. This plan, and provisions of NPPF, such as paragraph 172, provide protection to the AONB. The AONB Team have expressed an opinion that the extent of designations and constraints across the Dorset Plan area might justify restraint in responding to the objectively assessed 'need' figure. However, it is also noted that the Dorset Local Plan makes a limited number of 'major' proposals in Dorset AONB, thereby responding to a comment made in the Examination Report for West Dorset Local Plan, that subsequent efforts to address housing need should seek to limit allocations within the designated area.

3. Partners' 90 second updates

- a. **GDickinson**: Threat to the AONB from housing development is increasing – CPRE report [here](#)
- b. **WBond**: Locally big changes include the Poole Harbour Consent Order limiting nitrates, now in implementation phase. ELM – great desire to hear more detail from Defra to enable decision-making as agricultural support is on the cusp of change.
- c. **CllrRBryan**: £19m of Government funding to de-carbonise Dorset Council buildings by September being delivered by Property and Assets team. Work on exchange of fuels started (from gas to battery power). Low Carbon Dorset team achieving great results and hope to extend beyond end date of 2022.
- d. **JPope**: Dorset County Museum reopens on 28th May, many synergies with the AONB and urge all to visit. JCT – lots of progress being made with the supervision of the site and an excellent annual review issued [here](#)
- e. **CllrTarr**: Congratulated the team on a successful 18 months of work and in particular visitor management project delivery.
- f. **KCalder**: Wessex Env. Agency are in transition and looking at how it delivers more and better environmental outcomes. Looking at the delivery of the Poole Harbour consent order, LNRN priorities for the future and a catchment strategy for the Stour.
- g. **RLloyd**: Dealing with Countryside Stewardship, SSSI's, Dorset Downs and Dales meeting next week, nature recovery networks ongoing and positive.
- h. **HJefferson**: NT houses are re-opening, visitor management issues – warmer weather increases visitor numbers and problems such as overnight parking etc, gearing up for a busy summer. Investment in Hive Beach car park -sorting out drainage issues, safety signage etc
- i. **NSherring**: Bringing diversity into the natural environment. In contact with Tom Clark (NT) ref Studland VM – taking a proactive approach to limiting tensions between locals and visitors from London/Eastern European backgrounds.
- j. **PBowyer**: Would be helpful for PCs to know what no. of houses planned. Described Swanage's non-designated heritage assets survey; to be shared and sent to us accordingly.

- k. JDavis: Local Access Forum has not met for several years but back in operation now and will be working on a new DC Rights of Way Improvement Plan. ELM – looking to see if there will be opportunities to enhance public access to countryside.

4. Delivering the AONB Management Plan

TM presented on AONB team delivery report. Team members updated the board additionally: -

Ian Rees – Virtual [presentation](#) on the Marshwood Vale Landscape Enhancement Initiative. Over the past 3 years the LEI has worked to improve this farmed landscape, laying hedgerows and fencing sites, planting hedgerow Oaks and orchard trees to create and expand traditional orchards, undertaken meadow restoration and scrub control, undertaken pond restoration to protect the great crested newt and established a wild daffodil nursery. This project was undertaken with volunteers (valued over £32k). An application is currently in with the National Grid, and if successful this initiative will continue.

TM – explained that other linked projects include Reconnecting the Ridgeway (also LEI), West Dorset Rivers and Streams, including the Asker River project and Farming for the Nation (DEFRA test & trial for ELMS land management) – we will share this report when ready (see link section 3.10 of board papers)

Julie Hammon (Stepping into Nature) – Health and Nature Dorset (HAND) launched last week. This group aims to develop collaborative projects to deliver health outcomes. They have 8 priorities, one of these is Social Prescribing activities which ties into the Nature Buddies – Connecting to Nature through activity, a Thriving Communities funded initiative. This initiative is looking at opportunities for nature, art and physical need activities across Dorset and includes training community groups to deliver activities. There are training opportunities available at the moment around I&D so please do circulate these. Picnic in the Park has had a spring update so urged all to take a look.

Health & Nature Dorset <https://dorsetinp.org.uk/hand/>

Thriving Communities <https://theartsdevelopmentcompany.org.uk/our-work/nature-buddies/>

Picnic in the Parks www.picnicintheparks.org

For more information please email Julie.hammon@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

5. Art in the Landscape – a national strategy for adoption

Virtual [presentation](#) from Sue Dampney on the benefits of the arts in engaging and deepening people's connection to landscape, and the benefits to the partnership in adopting the newly commissioned [Arts in the Landscape Strategy: connecting people to nature through art and culture](#) through embedding the arts in our strategy.

Comments:

- a. Cllr Tarr: Strongly support it, and as NSherring said the arts can also encourage people to visit inland such as Hambledon Hill/Milton Abbas where businesses need trade as much as in coastal areas.
- b. JPope: One of the new galleries at Dorset County Museum is entitled 'Artist's Dorset' which is looking at all forms of art include. sculpture, photography etc so many synergies in this field.
- c. KCalder: Feel excited and inspired by the presentation. We are looking at the bigger picture which will bring benefits to the partnership in the long run.
- d. PSterling: SD Ridgeway project transformed the landscape and arts projects a big part of this. Important to link in with other AONBs and the national messages which can be spread.
- e. TMunro: The new post proposed would be a small amount per AONB (at most £1500)

PSterling – Thanks to Sue for an excellent presentation

RESOLUTIONS:

1. The AONB Board agrees to adopt the Arts in the Landscape Strategy and to participate in coordinated national and local action resulting from the Strategy.

2. The AONB Board agrees to be open to the future contribution of funds to the collective Arts in Landscape fund, in particular the proposed 5-year national post that will provide a resource to all AONBs.

3. The AONB Board agrees that it will use the arts to help join up its work in nature recovery and the mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change.

6. The Glover Review (update)

TM reported a government response to the Glover Review is imminent. On Countryfile recently 'The National Landscape Service' was reported as being the Ministers preferred employing body for all NP and AONB staff including the creation of an ALM body going forward which has caused concern. However, it's believed details around this will be part of the Minister's statement to be announced in 2-3 weeks time. There is a new Minister for Landscapes – Lord Benyon. Natural England will also be announcing a new landscape strategy in a few months' time which we will circulate.

7. Farming in Protected Landscapes - FiPL (update)

TM reported that he is sitting on a working group with DEFRA to help develop a new agri-transition fund - FiPL. DEFRA have just approved the principle and it will be going to board soon to be ratified. This is a substantial fund of £500,000 to be distributed on farm projects (climate, nature, people and place) over a 3-year front loaded programme. The AONB team intend to recruit 2 additional members of staff to administer the scheme. A local assessment panel will need to be created to meet every 6-8 weeks. Contact Tom if you are interested in being part of this. Please do not share this news beyond your organisations. There will be a national launch in June.

8. Dorset AONB 2020-2021 Provisional Partnership Accounts

TM presented the paper.

Comments:

- a. P Sterling congratulated the team as the figures looking very good despite the pandemic.

9. Presentation: Keeping Dorset Safe – Joint barbeque & fire campaign

[Presentation](#) from Bridget Betts, Environment Advice Manager. Bridget explained that the problem of BBQ's / campfires is a growing issue, as highlighted by Wareham forest fire last year. In light of this Councillors have asked for a co-ordinated approach to tackling this which she is leading on. Having undertaken extensive research with many partners it was agreed that a new BBQ and Wildfire policy was needed which has now been adopted, along with other measures such as electric BBQ's (currently monitoring Bournemouth's scheme), new fire warden scheme, including dog walkers in Heathland locations this year and lots of campaign and comms work in conjunction with a wide range of partners across Dorset.

Measures being taken include:

- Clear, consistent messaging
- Build on Urban Heath Partnership work – banners etc
- Litter Free Dorset are encouraging supermarkets and shops not to sell BBQ's and/or put up safety messaging signage
- New signs – posters and banners, include. more road signs
- Using Town & Parish Councils to deliver messages
- Leaflets for DC staff (& partners)
- Digital campaign 'Picnic not BBQs', joint website on DC site, getting people to sign up to support it

Comments:

- a. WBond: Supportive of road signs going out as many visitors not from the local area but further afield and come armed with BBQs.
- b. P Sterling: Congratulated Bridget on the campaign and partnership working.

10. Presentation: Summer Visitor Campaign

[Presentation](#) from Sally King, Visitor Tourism and Access Manager.

Sally explained some of the visitor management challenges faced after the first lock down. How a lack of resources and guidance coupled with a heatwave, furlough and a new visitor demographic unfamiliar with the countryside led to increased anti-social behaviour, negative publicity and additional costs for landowners in Dorset.

To address potential VM challenges this summer Dorset AONB team have co-ordinated stakeholders to improve joined up ways of working and DC have set up a collaborative Operations Group. Consequentially a sub-group of this have devised a new Summer ‘Behavioural Change’ campaign which is upbeat, energised and features younger people to appeal to the new visitor demographic. Led by DC Comms and funded by Central Government this new campaign entitled ‘Promise to Love Dorset’ will be launched in time for half term. This takes a positive DO approach and will feature static displays, posters, leaflets and videos promoting the Promise which can be used in a mixed marketing approach. All the assets are unbranded and available on the [Visit Dorset website](#) . Partners are encouraged to use and share the resources. Evaluation of the campaign will be on-going.

Comments:

- a. P Sterling: impressed with the speed at which the campaign has been devised, the excellent collaborative working and useful evaluation scheduled.
- b. RTarr: An excellent piece of work
- c. HJefferson: Thanks to both Sally and Bridget – both pieces of work are great evidence of partnership working which punch above their weight.

11. Summer site visit to National Grid undergrounding site

An afternoon site visit is scheduled for Wednesday 30th June for board members. Full details to be circulated. Please let Kate or Tom know if you would like to attend.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates of next meetings

	Winter	Summer
AONB Steering Group	19 th October 2021	26 th April 2022 (tbc)
AONB Partnership Board	25 th November 2021	26 th May 2022

If you wish to have items added to the agenda for the Board, please ensure suggestions are sent to [Tom Munro](#), [Kate Townsend](#) or the [AONB Chairman](#) at least 7 days before the date of the Steering Group meeting which precedes the Board meeting, so they may be considered for timetabling by the that group.